DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 646 UD 019 885

TITLE Crisis and Opportunity: Education in Greater Kansas City. Summary Edition.
INSTITUTION Bi-State Committee on Education of the Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.
SPONS AGENCY Commission on Civil Rights, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Jan 77
NOTE 16p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Bus Transportation; *Educational Improvement; Educationally Disadvantaged; *Educational Problems; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; *Housing Patterns; Minority Group Children; Public Schools; Racially Balanced Schools; Racial Segregation; *Resource Allocations; *School Integration
IDENTIFIERS *Kansas (Kansas City)

ABSTRACT

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the Bi-State Committee on Education concerning public schools in the Greater Kansas City region, especially with regard to the problem of racial isolation. Educational activities and problems, civic and political leadership in the area, and the significance of segregated housing patterns are reviewed. Suggested remedies for improving the quality of education in the Kansas City area and for providing equal educational opportunities to minority and other educationally disadvantaged students include: (1) more equal allocation of resources; (2) busing; (3) improved leadership; (4) school improvement; (5) instructional improvement; (6) magnet schools; and (7) voluntary desegregation efforts. (EB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

OCT 2 3 1979

ED178646

CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY: EDUCATION IN GREATER KANSAS CITY

Summary Edition

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

—A report of the Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees to the United States Commission on Civil Rights prepared for the information and consideration of the Commission. This report will be considered by the Commission, and the Commission will make public its reaction. In the meantime, the findings and recommendations of this report should not be attributed to the Commission but only to the Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees.

January 1977

CG 010 885

CRISIS AND OPPORTUNITY:

EDUCATION IN GREATER KANSAS CITY

-A report prepared by the Bi-State Committee on Education of the Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

SUMMARY EDITION

ATTRIBUTION:

The findings and recommendations contained in this report are those of the Bi-State Committee on Education of the Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees to the United States Commission on Civil Rights and, as such, are not attributable to the Commission.

This report has been prepared by the State Advisory Committees for submission to the Commission, and will be considered by the Commission in formulating its recommendations to the President and to the Congress.

RIGHT OF RESPONSE:

Prior to the publication of a report, the State Advisory Committees afford to all individuals or organizations that may be defamed, degraded, or incriminated by any material contained in this report an opportunity to respond in writing to such material. All reponses have been incorporated, appended, or otherwise reflected in the publication.

THE BI-STATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Stanley D. Rostov, Chairperson
Kansas City, Missouri

Rev. Emanuel Cleaver
Kansas City, Missouri

Al-Donna Daniels
Kansas City, Kansas

Benjamin H. Day
Leavenworth, Kansas

Dwight D. Henderson
Kansas City, Kansas

Rayna F. Levine
Overland Park, Kansas

Fr. Thomas E. Punzo
Lawrence, Kansas

Magdalena F. Rodriguez
Kansas City, Kansas

Ray S. Rodriguez
Kansas City, Missouri

Mabel Schulenberg
Independence, Missouri

Gwendolyn Wells
Kansas City, Missouri

MEMBERSHIP

KANSAS AND MISSOURI ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

KANSAS	MISSOURI
Constance L. Menninger, Chairperson Topeka	John B. Ervin, Chairperson St. Louis
Herman D. Lujan, Vice Chairperson Lawrence	Joanne Collins, Vice Chairperson Kansas City
Billy J. Burgess Lawrence	Ray S. Rodriguez, Secretary Kansas City
Carlos F. Cortes Mission Hills	Betty A. Adams Jefferson City
Al-Donna Daniels Kansas City	Anita L. Bond St. Louis
Benjamin H. Day Leavenworth	Frank E. Brennan Kansas City
Jackie Gossard Wichita	John W. Buechner St. Louis
Dwight D. Henderson Kansas City	Rev. Emanuel Cleaver Kansas City
Rayna F. Levine Overland Park	Roy Cooper, Jr. Hayti
Marston McCluggage Lawrence	Charles W. Duffy St. Louis
Connie A. Peters Wichita	Nancy L. Fields St. Louis
Fr. Thomas E. Punzo Lawrence	Elizabeth Gutierrez Kansas City
Magdalena F. Rodriguez	Ruth Jacobson

Kansas City

George Rogers
Wichita

Ruth G. Shechter
Fairway

Forrest Swall
Lawrence

St. Louis

Joan Krauskopf
Columbia

Myron Marty
St. Louis

Stanley Rostov
Kansas City

Mabel Schulenberg
Independence

Mary Anne Sedey
St. Louis

Gwendolyn Wells
Kansas City

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

KANSAS AND MISSOURI ADVISORY COMMITTEES
TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS
January 1977

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman
Stephen Horn, Vice Chairman
Frankie M. Freeman
Manuel Ruiz, Jr.
Murray Saltzman

John A. Buggs, Staff Director

Sirs and Madam:

The Kansas and Missouri Advisory Committees, pursuant to their responsibility to advise the Commission on civil rights problems in these States, submit the report of their Bi-State Committee on Education on the problems of public education in the Greater Kansas City area.

The Bi-State Committee reviewed the current status of educational activities and problems in the area. It reviewed the activities of civic and political leadership in the area. It considered the significance of segregated housing patterns. Based on all of these, the Committee explored a range of possible solutions which became the basis for its findings and recommendations.

The school districts in the Greater Kansas City area are racially segregated in the sense that minority pupils tend to be concentrated within the two central city districts. The Committee recommends that desegregation plans be implemented in the central city districts. It also recommends voluntary city-suburban programs, increased fundings to improve the quality of education and the attractiveness of the central city schools, appropriate assistance from institutions of higher education, Federal agencies (acting through the Federal Executive Board), business, labor, and other relevant organizations. Such efforts should be made on a regional or metropolitan basis

involving at least the first tier of districts surrounding the central cities.

Large numbers of students in schools with large proportions of economically disadvantaged students are not acquiring the basic skills needed to obtain satisfying employment and a productive life. Additional State funds should be made available to ensure educational opportunity to economically disadvantaged students. Area school districts should take steps to eliminate socioeconomic segregation in student enrollment patterns.

The Committee does not recommend merely throwing money at the problem. The funds must be used effectively as part of a systematic effort to identify and solve student learning problems, improve the ratio of teachers to students in the schools, introduce appropriate teaching arrangements to allow for increased success in teaching basic skills and achieving other goals, improving the quality of staff, and providing relevant staff development activities.

The Committee believes desegregation plans should be part of a larger, comprehensive, long-range program of metropolitan development. The Mid-America Regional Council and similar municipal and civic organizations should begin to work with the central city school districts to develop stable, long-range desegregation plans extending beyond immediate desegregation of the schools. Racially and economically mixed neighborhoods and schools that now exist must remain attractive. Desegregation plans should make integrated neighborhoods more attractive than segregated neighborhoods.

We trust that the Bi-State Committee's report will be a useful contribution to the Commission's effort to assure equal educational opportunity for all.

The Bi-State Committee is forwarding this report to school officials, city, State authorities, and members of civil rights, community, and civic groups in Greater Kansas City.

Respectfully,

/s/

John B. Ervin
Chairperson, Missouri Advisory Committee

Constance L. Menninger
Chairperson, Kansas Advisory Committee

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was prepared by staff of the Central States Regional Office: Etta Lou Wilkinson, Joe R. Solis, and Malcolm J. Barnett with the assistance of Jo Ann Daniels and Gloria O'Leary.

All work of the office is guided by Thomas L. Neumann, regional director.

Legal review was conducted by Melvin L. Jenkins.

Final preparation for publication of this report was the responsibility of Deborah Harrison, Vivian Hauser, Rita Higgins, and Vivian Washington, supervised by Bobby Wortman, in the Commission's Publications Support Center, Office of Management.

Preparation of all State Advisory Committee reports is supervised by Isaiah T. Creswell, Jr., Assistant Staff Director of Field Operations, Washington, D.C.

THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The United States Commission on Civil Rights, created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is an independent, bipartisan agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government. By the terms of the act, as amended, the Commission is charged with the following duties pertaining to denials of the equal protection of the laws based on race, color, sex, religion, or national origin, or in the administration of justice: investigation of individual discriminatory denials of the right to vote; study of legal developments with respect to denials of the equal protection of the law; appraisal of the laws and policies of the United States with respect to denials of equal protection of the law; maintenance of a national clearinghouse for information respecting denials of equal protection of the law; and investigation of patterns or practices of fraud or discrimination in the conduct of Federal elections. The Commission is also required to submit reports to the President and the Congress at such times as the Commission, the Congress, or the President shall deem desirable.

THE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

An Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights has been established in each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia pursuant to section 105(c) of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as amended. The Advisory Committees are made up of responsible persons who serve without compensation. Their functions under their mandate from the Commission are to: advise the Commission of all relevant information concerning their respective States on matters within the jurisdiction of the Commission; advise the Commission on matters of mutual concern in the preparation of reports of the Commission to the President and the Congress; receive reports, suggestions, and recommendations from individuals, public and private organizations, and public officials upon matters pertinent to inquiries conducted by the State Advisory Committee; initiate and forward advice and recommendations to the Commission upon matters in which the Commission shall request the assistance of the State Advisory Committee; and attend, as observers, any open hearing or conference which the Commission may hold within the State.

SUMMARY

The Kansas and Missouri State Advisory Committees to the United States Commission on Civil Rights have authorized publication of this report in their names. It is the work of the Bi-State Committee on Education, a group composed of members from both State Advisory Committees. The Bi-State Committee was formed in January 1976 to review the condition of public education in the Greater Kansas City region and particularly the problems of racial isolation. The Committee was asked to consider the context in which racial isolation existed and suggest practical solutions. Legal actions-an administrative law proceeding involving Kansas City (Missouri) School District (KCSD) and a Federal district court action initiated by the Justice Department against Kansas City (Kansas) Unified School District 500(KCK)-were in progress. A citizens' task force on desegregation was also seeking solutions that would decrease racial isolation in KCSD.

The Bi-State Committee has sought to make an independent assessment of the problems and prospects for education in the areas. The study looked at desegregation, quality of education, and the complexity of metropolitan governance as they affect area public schools. The balkanization of school districts on the Missouri side stands out in sharp contrast to the increasing cooperation and interaction of other area institutions.

The Bi-State Committee reviewed the current status of educational activities and problems in the area. It also reviewed the activities of civic and political leadership in the area. It considered the significance of segregated housing patterns. Based on all of these, the Committee explored a range of possible solutions which became the basis for its findings and recommendations.

Although existing State laws have not encouraged umbrella governments, local governments in the region, at times urged by Federal authorities, have taken many actions to create effective regional service agencies in health, housing, criminal justice, water and sewerlines, transportation, employment, and planning. The most significant development is the creation by the local governments of the Mid-America Regional Council to serve as the reviewer of all Federally funded projects requiring A-95 review. This is required by a variety of Federal agencies as a condition of Federal support for services. But joint

planning and joint activities can be traced back to the 1940s and earlier. A growing number of Federal agencies have insisted on these joint efforts, just as earlier Federal expenditure helped the area expand and thus precipitated the proliferation of local governments.

Quality education is the goal of every parent. Yet for the children of less educated and lower socioeconomic groups, especially for minority group children, this goal has been and remains elusive. Differences in the median income of a community and the proportion of adults with high school education do affect the quality of education because they affect the environment out of which pupils relate to school. Particularly noteworthy in Kansas City is the unequal allocation of resources, especially for poor children. In addition, the Bi-State Committee found evidence suggesting that low-income students in the central city receive fewer educational services especially designed for their needs than do many low-income students in wealthier communities outside the central city. This is dramatically apparent from the provision of Title I services. The wealthier the community in which a school district is located, the more likely the concentrations of poor children are to have access to Title I programs, the better is the teacher/pupil ratio, and the more local funds are available to meet the needs of the poor.

Efforts to assess the instruction and services provided whether for minority and poor pupils or for all pupils in the metropolitan area were hampered by unavailability of data. Many districts refused to supply sufficient data on which precise assessments could be made, but they complained when assessments were attempted based upon what little data were available.

While it is generally conceded that suburban schools turn out higher achieving students, suburban district schools did not appear to provide a higher quality of education relative to the ability of their students than did the central city districts. Persons interviewed believe neither city nor suburban districts provide appropriate compensatory education, stimulate very large proportions of their pupils to maximum efforts, or consistently seek community participation in solutions. Local chapters of the League of Women Voters, business leaders, and community leaders all find fault with both city and suburban systems. Efforts to individualize instruction lag as compared with

outstanding school districts in some other metropolitan areas, and few schools are trying to improve the quality of instruction in a systematic fashion.

Racial isolation and lack of exposure to the multiracial and multicultural characteristics of the area are problems for both cities and suburbs. The central city districts are segregated, of themselves. But as districts they are also segregated by comparison with the suburbs around them. Real contact, in the light of existing demographic patterns, requires multidistrict involvement.

Remedies for racial isolation probably require some movement of pupils. Staff calculations show that at the high school level a school-to-school mean travel time of about 15 minutes would generally be required to eliminate racial isolation utilizing a 5-county base. A Jackson County base would require about 16 minutes in travel. An attendence area including three Missouri counties would require about 15 minutes in travel. Desegregation of KCK involving the Shawnee Mission district would require approximately 19 minutes in travel.

Enrollment changes are the consequence of a steady outward migration from the central cities coupled with changes in family cycles in many communities. This has resulted in a need to build more schools in some districts while other districts have surplus capacity.

All the school districts in the area plead poverty. Some are in reality poorer than others. There are really only a few districts whose resources or expenditures differ dramatically from the mean. But since some districts have greater <u>needs</u> than others, disparate educational opportunity results. Remedial and compensatory education require two to three times the expenditure that "regular" education requires. Educating the socially maladjusted or handicapped may require as much as three times the funding that "regular" education requires. Neither local resources nor State or Federal contributions provide sufficient additional resources to allow the central city districts to serve adequately their larger proportions of disadvantaged pupils at the same level as the suburban districts serve their disadvantaged. Merely reallocating resources in Jackson, Clay, and Platte counties on a per pupil basis would result in an increase of $69 per pupil for KCSD. Reallocation on a per person basis, to take account of the problems associated

with population density in a metropolitan area, would result in an increase of $28.10 per capita in KCSD. Similar changes on the Kansas side would not benefit the KCK school district because prior State action has already provided additional resources, but KCK still has insufficient resources to deal with its problems. Neither the Kansas formula nor the proposed Missouri reforms have or are likely to provide sufficient additional benefits for the central cities to compensate them for their educational or economic burdens.

The quality of education, the needs of new generations of students, the change in demographic patterns, the financing of education, and desegregation, all require attention. Yet effective leadership has been lacking-most especially on desegregation. Federal, State, and local government officials have been largely silent or hostile to efforts for comprehensive reforms that would reduce racial isolation. Some white groups and most black groups have supported desegregation. Other white groups, especially in the Jackson County area, have opposed change. Business has been silent, concentrating its efforts on the fiscal and administrative problems of education. Federal and State agencies with monitoring or supervisory authority have been unable or unwilling to push for change. The school districts have failed to take positive steps to end segregation where it has been created by legal action. Suburban districts have been reluctant to become involved in the solution to problems which they perceive as beyond their legal responsibility. Everyone in power claims that responsibility for change lies elsewhere.

The principal cause of the problem, everyone agrees, is racially isolated housing patterns. Both public and private sector providers of housing have effectively created and maintained racial isolation. The Federal Government has funded racially isolated housing and until recently encouraged "homogeneous" neighborhoods. Local governments have failed to establish or enforce fair housing mechanisms; they have been aided and abetted by the private housing industry. These circumstances have made evolutionary change difficult if not impossible.

The area confronts twin problems. Desegregation is the law of the land. It must occur in those districts which are racially isolated. At the same time, unless desegregation is stabilized, the problem will merely move from district to

district without permanent resolution. Mere adjustment of racial balance within already depressed central city districts may be imposed under a narrow interpretation of the Constitution. Unless the schools in these districts are improved significantly so as to prevent the flight of the remaining middle class, both black and white, the problem will merely transfer to the suburbs as demographic changes occur.

A stable, quality educational system is the goal of the Bi-State Committee. To achieve this it will be necessary to upgrade education in the entire area. The special needs of the central city districts must be addressed. They have a larger share of educationally disadvantaged students. Educating such pupils is more difficult and more expensive than educating middle-class children. A comprehensive review of educational methods and practices is needed if the community is to obtain quality education. This will require cooperative efforts by all school districts in the area as well as substantial State and Federal financial assistance. Assistance for a magnet school program is needed from local colleges and universities and from the business and civic communities. These magnet schools should be designed in cooperation with the suburban districts to minimize duplication of services and offer the widest possible range of educational opportunities for students in the region. (An appendix to this report provides illustrations of the kinds of magnet schools which might be established.) Schools must be open to effective public scrutiny so that citizens may participate in identifying and resolving problems.

Effective desegregation must be stable. A voluntary metropolitan desegregation formula is possible. This would eliminate racial and economic isolation in the two central city districts and stabilize neighborhoods which are losing or may lose their middle-income populations. Such a remedy requires that the two central city districts improve instructional quality in their multiracial schools and ensure that student assignments make desegregated neighborhoods more attractive than segregated ones. Mid-America Regional Council, municipal planning agencies, and civic organizations can work with the central school districts to develop effective long-range desegregation plans that will be attractive and serve as a nucleus for redevelopment of neighborhoods on a racially and economically mixed basis.

If no action is apparent before March 1977, the Bi-State Committee will recommend that legal proceedings be initiated to bring about metropolitan remedies.

* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1977 734-332/201